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Operational activities for development: operational activities for development of the United Nations system

South Africa:* draft resolution

Operational activities for development of the United Nations system

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 67/226 of 21 December 2012, 68/229 of 20 December 2013 and 69/238 of 19 December 2014, in which key system-wide policy orientations were established for development cooperation at both the headquarters and the country levels, and Economic and Social Council resolutions 2013/5 of 12 July 2013, 2014/14 of 14 July 2014 and 2015/15 of 29 June 2015 on progress in the implementation of resolution 67/226,

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", recognizing that it builds on the Millennium Development Goals and seeks to complete their unfinished business, and stressing the importance of the implementation of this new ambitious Agenda, which has poverty eradication at its core and aims at promoting the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development,

Reaffirming also its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015, on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it and helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions within the framework of a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development,

Recalling the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals and its outcome document[1] and the outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals,[2]

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* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China.

[1] Resolution 65/1.

[2] Resolution 68/6.

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Reaffirming the importance of the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development, through which the General Assembly establishes key system-wide policy orientations for development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations system,

Recalling the role of the Economic and Social Council in providing coordination and guidance to the United Nations system in order to ensure that policy orientations established by the General Assembly are implemented on a system-wide basis in accordance with all relevant Assembly resolutions,

Reaffirming that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should be, inter alia, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the development needs of programme countries in a flexible manner, and that the operational activities are carried out for the benefit of programme countries, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their own policies and priorities for development,

Affirming that the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should provide a key contribution to the implementation of the ambitious and transformational objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and should therefore be improved, including the ability of the United Nations development system, in line with its mandate, to assist countries in responding to the challenges of sustainable development,

Acknowledging the efforts of the United Nations development system to provide quality inputs and appropriate updates to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of its resolution 67/226 with a view to continuing to improve evidence-based, high-quality analytical reporting on the operational activities for development, address challenges, facilitate the decision-making processes of Member States and contribute to enhancing the implementation of system-wide mandates, while stressing the need to minimize transaction costs associated with reporting,

Recognizing the importance and catalytic role of predictable official development assistance for international development,

Stressing the importance of inclusiveness within the United Nations development system and that observer States be taken into account in the implementation of the present resolution,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;[3]

2. *Also takes note* of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on an analysis of the resource mobilization function within the United Nations system[4] and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives

[3] A/70/62-E/2015/4.
[4] A/69/737.

Board for Coordination thereon,[5] and decides to postpone the consideration of these documents to its seventy-first session, in 2016;

3. *Further takes note* of the reports of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation on its eighteenth session[6] and on its intersessional meeting held on 8 September 2015,[7] and welcomes the decisions adopted at those meetings;[8]

4. *Recalls* Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/15 on operational activities for development, and expresses appreciation for the guidance provided by the Council on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226;

5. *Acknowledges* the request by the Economic and Social Council that the United Nations funds and programmes make every effort to continue to improve monitoring and data-collection methods, with a view to contributing to the further enhancement of the analytical quality of the report of the Secretary-General on operational activities for development of the United Nations system;

6. *Underlines* the need to better reflect the multidimensional nature of development and poverty, as well as the importance of developing a common understanding among Member States and other stakeholders of that multidimensionality and reflecting it in the context of the dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system, the report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration and action by Member States during the seventy-first session of the Assembly, in 2016, and the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in this regard invites Member States, supported by the international community, to consider developing complementary measurements, including methodologies and indicators for measuring human development, that better reflect that multidimensionality;

7. *Reaffirms* the importance of the contribution of operational activities for development to the national capacity development and development effectiveness of the United Nations development system in addressing the key areas identified in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, recalls in this regard its request to the organizations of the United Nations development system to develop, for the consideration of Member States, a common approach for measuring progress in capacity development, including measures to ensure sustainability, as well as to develop, in a manner consistent with their mandates, specific frameworks aimed at enabling programme countries, upon their request, to design, monitor and evaluate results in the development of their capacity to achieve national development goals and strategies, and invites the Secretary-General to provide comprehensive and evidence-based updates on measures taken in this regard in his 2016 annual report on the implementation of its resolution 67/226;

8. *Requests* the funds and programmes of the United Nations development system, and invites the specialized agencies, to consider the findings and observations related to national capacity gaps repeatedly highlighted by programme countries to be addressed through the work of the operational activities for development of the

[5] A/69/737/Add.1.

[6] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 39* (A/69/39).

[7] SSC/18/IM/2.

[8] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 39* (A/69/39), chap. I, and SSC/18/IM/2, chap. I.

United Nations system, including through the strengthening and use of national capacities, and to report to their governing bodies in 2016 with recommendations for implementation in this regard;

9. *Notes* that national monitoring and reporting systems and national procurement, financial and evaluation capacities have been underused, and in this regard reiterates the mandate contained in its resolution 67/226 that the United Nations development system make increased use of national public and private systems for support services as a means of strengthening national capacities and reducing transaction costs;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in his report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 to the Economic and Social Council in 2016, in consultation with Member States, information on steps taken by entities of the United Nations development system to strengthen and use national capacities, including ensuring the long-term impact of capacities built, and to make proposals to address any obstacles and challenges;

11. *Reiterates* that core resources, because of their untied nature, continue to be the bedrock of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and in this regard recognizes the need for the organizations of the development system to address, on a continuous basis, the imbalance between core and non-core resources and to report to the Economic and Social Council in 2016, as part of their regular reporting, on the measures taken to address this imbalance;

12. *Reiterates the call* for donor countries and other countries in a position to do so to maintain and substantially increase their voluntary contributions, in a manner consistent with their capacities, to the core or regular budgets of the United Nations development system, in particular its funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and to contribute on a multi-year basis in a sustained and predictable manner;

13. *Notes* that the majority of the increase in funding for the United Nations development system between 1998 and 2013 was in the form of non-core resources, resulting in an imbalance between core and non-core resources, and notes with concern that the percentage of core resources in the overall funding for operational activities continued to decline, representing only 25 per cent in 2013;

14. *Also notes* that non-core resources represent an important contribution to the overall resource base of the United Nations development system and complement core resources in supporting operational activities for development, thereby contributing to an increase in total resources, while noting the need to make non-core resources more flexible, more predictable and better aligned with strategic plans and national priorities and recognizing that non-core resources are not a substitute for core resources;

15. *Recognizes* that non-core resources pose challenges, in particular restricted earmarked funding such as single-donor project-specific funding, by potentially increasing transaction costs, demand for additional reporting, fragmentation, competition and overlap among entities and providing disincentives for pursuing an Organization-wide focus, strategic positioning and coherence, and may also potentially distort programme priorities regulated by intergovernmental bodies and processes;

16. *Notes with concern* in this regard that contributions to pooled funding arrangements, such as thematic funds of entities and United Nations multi-partner

trust funds and joint programmes, accounted for only 8 per cent of non-core resource flows to development-related activities in 2013, and encourages all contributors of non-core resources to expand the use of less-restricted earmarked funding arrangements;

17. *Welcomes* the progress made by the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies in ensuring that available and projected core and non-core resources are consolidated within an integrated budgetary framework, based on the priorities of their respective strategic plans, and encourages all entities that have not already done so to develop such integrated frameworks in their next budget cycle;

18. *Notes with concern* that the mandate contained in its resolution 67/226 with respect to the development and operationalization of the concept of critical mass of core resources was not fulfilled as originally foreseen, notes the adoption in 2014 by the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services of decisions 2014/24 and 2014/25 and the adoption by the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund of decision 2014/17, in which they noted common principles for the concept of critical mass of resources and core resources, requests the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund to consult further with Member States on ways to ensure a critical mass of core resources, for consideration and action during the quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2016, and reiterates the request to the United Nations funds and programmes that have not yet done so to define common principles for the concept of critical mass of core resources, which may include the level of resources adequate to respond to the needs of programme countries and to produce the results expected in the strategic plans, including administrative, management and programme costs, in consultation with Member States, with a view to a decision by their respective governing bodies in 2016;

19. *Stresses* the need to avoid the use of core or regular resources to subsidize activities financed by non-core or extrabudgetary resources, reaffirms that the guiding principle governing the financing of all non-programme costs should be based on full cost recovery from core and non-core funding sources, proportionally, and in this regard notes the timelines agreed by the executive boards of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for an independent and external assessment, to be performed in 2016, of the consistency and alignment of the new cost-recovery methodology with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review;

20. *Takes note* of decisions 2014/24 and 2014/25 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services, decision 2014/17 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund and decision 2014/6 of the Executive Board of UN-Women on the organization of structured dialogues with Member States on ways to finance the development results agreed in the strategic planning cycle of the respective entities, and in this regard requests the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, as appropriate, to organize such structured dialogues on an annual basis, as part of their regular meeting schedule, with a view to making

non-core resources more predictable and less restricted/earmarked, broadening the donor base and improving the adequacy and predictability of resource flows;

21. *Calls upon* United Nations country teams to adopt as a practice the use of common budgetary frameworks as soon as possible, which would not constitute a legal constraint on resource spending authority, and requests United Nations funds and programmes and encourages the specialized agencies to continue to provide the necessary information on contributions to the resident coordinators upon agreement with programme countries, improve the timeliness and quality of information provided and ensure that the common budgetary framework is a useful and effective instrument for strengthening the quality of system-wide resource planning in support of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;

22. *Urges* entities of the United Nations development system with operational activities for development that have not done so to fully align their strategic plans and their strategic planning and budgeting cycles with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, taking into account their respective mandates;

23. *Recognizes* the importance of continuing to strengthen and improve the results-focused delivery of operational activities for development of the funds and programmes of the United Nations system in order to maximize their support for accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in the least developed countries and other developing countries that are lagging behind in meeting the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals;

24. *Stresses* that funding for operational activities should be aligned with the national priorities and plans of the programme countries as well as the strategic plans, mandates, resource frameworks and priorities of the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, and underscores in that regard the need to further strengthen the delivery of results and the results-based frameworks of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations development system and to improve their reporting on outputs and nationally owned outcomes;

25. *Reaffirms* that the eradication of poverty is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development in developing countries, particularly in Africa, and underlines the importance of accelerating sustainable, broad-based, inclusive and equitable economic growth for the benefit of all people and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals;

26. *Also reaffirms* its call, in its resolution 67/226, for the organizations of the United Nations development system to assign the highest priority to the eradication of poverty, and in this regard acknowledges the request by the Economic and Social Council to the United Nations funds and programmes to include in their regular reporting to the Council information on steps taken, in accordance with their mandates, on the scaling up of efforts to address the root causes of extreme poverty and hunger, the sharing of good practices, lessons learned, strategies, programmes and policies, including capacity-building, employment generation, education, vocational training, rural development and the mobilization of resources, which are aimed at achieving poverty eradication and promoting the active participation of those living in poverty in the design and implementation of such programmes and policies;

27. *Welcomes* the integration of poverty eradication, as the overarching priority, into the strategic plans of some organizations of the United Nations system, in accordance with their mandates;

28. *Requests* all entities of the United Nations development system to ensure consistency and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in the context of midterm reviews and the elaboration of strategic plans and frameworks;

29. *Emphasizes* the need for United Nations operational activities for development to support Member States, upon their request, in mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda into their national plans and in full alignment with their national priorities, and in further ensuring national ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals;

30. *Notes* the importance of transparency and consultation with Member States in the context of operational activities for development on the implementation of the policy on integrated assessment and planning and the policy on United Nations transitions in the context of mission drawdown or withdrawal, as approved by the Secretary-General and the Integration Steering Group, stresses the need in this regard for transitional activities from relief to sustainable development to be undertaken under national ownership, and requests the Secretary-General to share information with and seek the views of Member States on the interlinkages between operational activities for development of the United Nations development system and the implementation and review of those elements of these policies that relate to operational activities for development of the United Nations development system;

31. *Urges* the United Nations development system to ensure that its support to recovery serves to bridge short-term emergency response and long-term development efforts by paying due attention to the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development needed for full recovery and for strengthening resilience leading to sustainable development, inter alia, by prioritizing tools including, but not limited to, local procurement, cash transfers and social safety nets, where appropriate;

32. *Recognizes* the need for the United Nations development system, as requested, to support inclusive country-level and country-owned transition from relief to development in countries affected by natural disasters or conflict, based on country-led assessments, and underlines the importance of building strong partnerships by providing aid and managing resources more effectively and aligning these resources for results, in line with country priorities, and by enhancing transparency, risk management and the use of country systems, strengthening national capacities and the timeliness of aid and improving the speed and predictability of funding to achieve better results, while underlining the importance of thorough planning and coordination between the United Nations funds and programmes, the specialized agencies and the Secretariat, within their respective mandates, to better respond to the needs and priorities of the affected States;

33. *Stresses* the importance of regular reporting from the United Nations development system at the country level, requests in this regard United Nations country teams to comply strictly with existing reporting requirements, namely, those regarding the once per cycle progress report on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the evaluation report on the Development Assistance Framework in all programme countries, and, in addition, annual country results reports and evaluation reports in "Delivering as one" countries to programme

country Governments, also requests United Nations country teams to share with programme country Governments, where available, all country progress reports, reviews and evaluations, and further requests that information on compliance be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of its resolution 67/226;

34. *Requests* the United Nations development system to ensure that reports to the Governments of programme countries are structured around the United Nations Development Assistance Framework or common planning framework outcomes, are linked to national development results and inform the Governments of programme countries of the results achieved by the United Nations country team as a whole, and requests the Secretary-General, as part of his regular reporting to the Economic and Social Council, to provide an update on progress in this regard;

35. *Reaffirms* that the "no one size fits all" approach and the principle of the voluntary adoption of the "Delivering as one" approach should be maintained so that the United Nations system can tailor its approach to partnership with the individual programme countries in a way that best suits their national needs, realities, priorities and planning modalities;

36. *Stresses* that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation;

37. *Notes* the continued demand of programme countries for United Nations support for South-South cooperation, reiterates in this regard its request to the heads of the specialized agencies, United Nations funds and programmes and regional commissions to pay special attention to the implementation of projects related to South-South cooperation, including those managed or supported by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, and requests the Secretary-General, as part of his regular reporting to the Economic and Social Council, to provide an update on progress in this regard;

38. *Recalls* the requests contained in its resolution 67/226 on strengthening South-South cooperation, in this regard notes the progress made by some organizations of the United Nations development system in mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation into their key policies, strategic frameworks, operational activities and budgets, and welcomes the recommendations and measures, as set out in decisions 18/1 and 18/IM/1 of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation,[8] to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation, including through the improved allocation of resources across the United Nations development system, including the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation;

39. *Notes* that further deliberation by Member States on the option presented by the Secretary-General in his report on measures to further strengthen the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation[9] will be required before a decision is taken on the idea of separating the Office as operationally autonomous from the United Nations Development Programme, and in this regard looks forward to the presentation by the Secretary-General, as part of his comprehensive report to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation at its nineteenth session, to be held in 2016, in consultation with Member States, the Office and the United Nations Development Programme, of a comprehensive proposal on concrete ways to enhance

[9] SSC/18/3.

the role and improve the impact of the Office under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme, including in the areas of financial, human and budgetary resources, including through the potential appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on South-South cooperation, and at the same time recommending specific contributions of the United Nations Development Programme under such a change, with a view to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

40. *Recalls* the decision in its resolution 68/229 that two pilot independent system-wide evaluations should be conducted in 2014 on the themes set out therein, subject to the provision and availability of extrabudgetary resources, calls for the acceleration of progress, reiterates its invitation to countries in a position to do so to contribute extrabudgetary resources for the effective and accelerated implementation of these evaluations in 2015, and requests the Secretary-General to provide an update to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on progress in the implementation of the evaluations;

41. *Reaffirms* the mandate contained in its resolution 67/226 with respect to the resident coordinator system, also reaffirms the importance of achieving diversification in the composition of the resident coordinator system in terms of geographical distribution and gender, further reaffirms the importance of the participation of all agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system on an equal footing in the resident coordinator system, requests the Secretary-General to make every effort in this regard to ensure the full application of these principles in the appointment of resident coordinators, notes the establishment in May 2014 of the new Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre, and in this regard encourages all agencies to nominate qualified candidates for the Centre, and requests the United Nations development system to continue to identify solutions in order to strengthen its ability to efficiently recruit and deploy experienced resident coordinators at the appropriate level of seniority who meet the highest standards of integrity;

42. *Welcomes* the road map for continuing the dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system in 2015 and 2016 involving Member States and all relevant stakeholders, including the proposed workshops and retreats, which will consider the interlinkages between the alignment of functions, funding practices, governance structures, including proposals for the reform of their composition and functioning, the capacity and impact of the United Nations development system, partnership approaches and organizational arrangements, and looks forward to this dialogue being reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration and action by Member States during its seventy-first session, in 2016;

43. *Calls upon* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and resources, to include observer States in the implementation of the present resolution.